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LA TERRASSE DU JURANÇON

A model of sustainable rural tourism

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Introduction



Name of the Practice: La Terrasse du Jurançon



Location: Pau, Bearn, France.



Type: Cultural promotion, economic and touristic development, traditional gastronomy and wine production.



Initiating Organization: 'Pau Tourisme' (tourism department of Pau), 'Les Vignerons du Jurançon' (association of independent wineries)



Year of Establishment: initiated in 2021



Current Status: Ongoing (annually)

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Initial research & Study visit

The selection of the best practice ***Terrasse du Jurançon*** was preceded by an initial research phase involving local stakeholders (tourism offices, producers, environmental associations). The selection criteria included: territorial impact, originality of the model, replicability, and the degree of community involvement.

A study visit was organized in Pau and Monein to directly observe the activities of Terrasse du Jurançon. The visit included guided tastings, meetings with winemakers and local artisans, and participation in cultural events. Observations highlighted the harmonious integration of tourism, culture, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. Lesson learned: the importance of involving the community from the very beginning to build authentic experiences.

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Primary Goals

- Promote **sustainable rural tourism** based on wine and local products.
- Support the **local economy** through direct collaboration with farmers, artisans, and winemakers.
- Raise **awareness about biodiversity**, sustainable agriculture, and cultural heritage.
- Foster **slow tourism**, encouraging visitors to engage deeply with the local environment and traditions.

Key Focus Areas

- Wine tourism and local gastronomy.
- Environmental sustainability and organic practices.
- Short food supply chains (circuit court).
- Education on biodiversity and sustainable living.
- Cultural heritage and community identity preservation

Current Status

- Fully **operational and growing**: a reference point for sustainable wine tourism in the region.
- Active collaborations with **regional tourism development programs**.
- Open to participation in **European rural tourism networks** and eligible for **EU funding opportunities** (e.g., LEADER, Interreg).
- Continues to expand its offer with new eco-friendly events and educational initiatives.

The practice

Activities Involved:

- **Wine Tastings:** Offering curated tasting experiences of Jurançon wines paired with local products.
- **Gastronomic Events:** Hosting dinners, picnics, and food festivals featuring regional cuisine.
- **Educational Workshops and guided tours:** Conducting sessions on sustainable farming, winemaking, and biodiversity, and tours on foot or bicycle.
- **Cultural Events:** Organizing concerts, exhibitions, and local craft markets to highlight rural traditions.
- **Seasonal Celebrations:** Special thematic activities during harvest season or summer.



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The Practice

Target Groups:

- **Tourists** seeking authentic, slow, and sustainable experiences.
- **Wine enthusiasts** and gastronomic travelers.
- **Families** looking for educational rural activities.
- **Eco-conscious visitors** interested in nature, sustainability, and local culture.
- **Local residents** participating in cultural events and community gatherings.



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The Practice

Stakeholders Involved



- **Local winemakers and farmers** providing products and experiences.
- **Tourism offices** of Monein, Pau, and the Jurançon area.
- **Environmental organizations** supporting sustainable practices.
- **Local artisans and food producers** (cheesemakers, beekeepers, etc.).
- **Municipality of Monein** and regional rural development agencies.
- **Visitors and tourists** who contribute to the local economy.

Local Benefits and Impact

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Supports the **local economy** through promotion of regional wines and food products.
- Strengthens **short supply chains** by sourcing directly from local farmers and artisans.
- Increases **off-season tourism**, helping to stabilize rural income throughout the year.
- Attracts **eco-conscious travelers** who tend to spend more on authentic, local experiences.

CULTURAL IMPACT

- Preserves and promotes the **Jurançon wine tradition** and rural know-how.
- Hosts cultural events that **celebrate local heritage** (music, art, gastronomy).
- Provides a platform for **local artisans** and small producers to gain visibility.
- Fosters **intergenerational knowledge transfer** through storytelling and guided experiences.

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Local Benefits and Impact

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- Implements **organic and low-impact viticulture** practices.
- Promotes **eco-friendly tourism**: slow travel, walking tours, minimal transportation needs.
- Encourages **waste reduction** and **responsible consumption** (reusable materials, no single-use plastics). Raises awareness on **biodiversity** and **land stewardship** through educational visits.
- Preserves **natural landscapes** and avoids over development or infrastructure-heavy tourism.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- Enhances **community cohesion** by involving local stakeholders in the tourism offer.
- Supports **rural revitalization** by creating employment and retaining youth in the area.
- Encourages **inclusive tourism** that respects the local way of life.
- Acts as a **meeting place** for both locals and visitors, strengthening social bonds.

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Visitors Benefits and Impact

Cultural Engagement & Education

- **Learning about tradition and sustainability.** Organizes **tastings, workshops, and guided tours** focused on sustainability and tradition.
- **Meaningful experience.** Offers a **meaningful experience** that deepens the connection between people and place.
- **Shift Toward slow and ethical Tourism:**Contributes to **changing tourist mindsets** toward more ethical and conscious travel.

Behavioral Impact on Visitors

- **Respect for traditions:** Increased respect for traditional wine production and local products and gastronomy.
- **Fostering sustainable travel habits :** getting there by walking or biking through the city as well as through the city encourages people to discover the city in an eco-responsible way.

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Sustainability Measures

Cultural Preservation

La Terrasse du Jurançon is deeply rooted in the preservation of rural heritage. It goes beyond offering wine by actively safeguarding the cultural fabric of the region. Through storytelling, traditional winemaking, seasonal events, and collaborations with local artists, it keeps alive the customs and identity of the Béarnaise countryside. The experience invites both locals and visitors to participate in a living culture that is shared, not staged.

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Sustainability Measures

Economic Sustainability

The project strengthens the local economy by creating short supply chains and reinvesting value into the community. All goods and services are locally sourced, supporting small producers, artisans, and winegrowers. This model fosters economic resilience and reduces dependence on global systems, offering a viable path forward for rural entrepreneurship and employment.

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Sustainability Measures

Resource Preservation

Environmental care is central to the terrace's philosophy. Sustainable farming practices, minimal waste, and protection of the surrounding landscape ensure that tourism does not deplete natural resources but contributes to their safeguarding. The vineyard serves as an example of how tourism can be regenerative—working with nature, not against it.

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Community Involvement

Winemakers

- As vendors
- Promoting the identity and tradition of their wines and the region
- Collaborating in the organization

Local institutions:

‘Pau Tourisme’, ‘Les Vignerons du Jurançon’

Key role in:

- Organization
- Funding
- Promotion

Local food producers, artisans and businesses

- Offering their products and promoting the local economy and culinary heritage alongside the wines

Residents and local volunteers

- Enhancing the city’s cultural heritage
- Collaborating in organization tasks
- Interacting with visitors

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Monitoring, Evaluation and Financing

Evaluation metrics to track the impact of the event

- Attendance: monitoring the number of visitors throughout the event.
- Wine sales: tracking the volume of wine sold by participating winemakers.
- Participant feedback: collecting feedback from attendees and winemakers.

Feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement

- Post-event surveys: distributing surveys to gather attendee opinions.
- Stakeholders meeting: collecting insights and opinions of organizers, winemakers and partners.
- Social media monitoring: analyzing comments and reviews on social media platforms after the festival.

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Monitoring, Evaluation and Financing

Financing

Even though there is no publicly available data about the budget for the festival, the stakeholders that have made it possible to hold it are the following:

- The local government
- Tourism organizations, including the Office de Tourisme Pau Pyrénées.
- Private businesses and wine industry stakeholders

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Replicability and Scalability

Transferability

La Terrasse du Jurançon offers a flexible model that can be replicated in other rural areas across Europe. The key to its success lies in its **low-cost, high-impact approach**: using existing landscapes (vineyards, farms), local know-how, and community networks to create immersive experiences.

Because the project relies on **simple infrastructure, seasonal events**, and direct collaboration with local producers, it is accessible even to small municipalities or cooperatives with limited resources. Any region with strong local identity and agricultural heritage can adapt this model to promote its terroir and cultural landscape.

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Replicability and Scalability

Challenges and Barriers	
1. Seasonality: most events are held in summer, which may limit year-round economic benefits.	3. Niche Target Audience : Attracts mainly wine-lovers or locals, which may reduce resilience to shifts in demand.
2. Staff & Volunteer Fatigue: The project relies on a few highly engaged people, risking burnout and lack of continuity	4. Bureaucratic Complexity: Small initiatives face administrative burdens (permits, food safety rules, etc.) that may hinder replication.

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Community-driven tourism can be sustainable and economically viable

La Terrasse du Jurançon proves that small rural areas can thrive through low-impact, local-led tourism.

Cultural heritage, environment, and entrepreneurship are integrated

It's not just about wine – it's a holistic experience of place, people, and practices

Key Conclusions & Takeaways

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The model is transferable to other rural regions: Key elements like short supply chains and open-air events can be adapted widely.

Challenges include seasonality, limited staff, and bureaucracy: Important to anticipate barriers and plan long-term sustainability strategies.

Scalability is possible through networks and digital tools: Involving youth, schools, and EU programs can help the model grow without losing its authenticity.



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